

JUL 11 1960

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Letters to The Times

Antarctic Treaty Opposed

Potential Danger Seen to Security
of the Free World

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NEW YORK TIMES:

I believe that it is a grave matter for the Senate to refuse ratification of a treaty, especially of a treaty that has been initiated and drafted by our own Government. With all due respect to the position of the Administration, I feel, however, that the Antarctic treaty is one instance where the refusal of ratification would be justified.

The Antarctic treaty represents an unwarranted surrender of our hard-won rights in the Antarctic; it gives the Soviet Union a status in the Antarctic to which it is not entitled; and it constitutes a potential danger to the free world's security.

In their letter of June 29, five West Coast university professors denied that the effect of the treaty would be to relinquish our rights in the Antarctic. I believe that Dr. Philip Jessup was much more realistic when he said in his testimony before the Foreign Relations Committee: "It would prevent the development of previously asserted claims of other countries to parts of the Antarctic."

If this is true, how can one possibly argue that the treaty would not prevent the development of our own rights into claims, and, after this, the formal developments of our claims?

Rights in Area

Moreover, the treaty prohibits any claims based on exploratory activities carried on over the next thirty years. I think it is a matter of elementary logic that the denial of any right to claim based on future activities invalidates, or at least seriously weakens, our own rights and the rights of other nations based on previous exploratory activities.

The letter from the professors also stated: "The Russian interest in the Antarctic goes back . . . as far as the explorations of Admiral Bellingshausen in 1819-21." This is nothing short of outrageous. Admiral von Bellingshausen sighted two islands lying off the Antarctic continent, and he never claimed that he sighted anything new. From 1821 until 1956, when the International Geophysical Year got under way, not a single Russian expedition set foot on Antarctica, or even explored its coastline.

States and other countries—but particularly the United States—were responsible for repeated expeditions to the Antarctic which, between them, succeeded in mapping some two million square miles.

Finally, the letter stated that "Russia's official policy is the only one which rejects the claims of other nations but she has made no claims herself though reserving the right to do so." This equates our own rights in Antarctica, which are based on priority and on total exploratory activities that dwarf those of all other nations combined, with the rights of the Soviet Union, based on nothing more substantial than Bellingshausen's sighting of two off-shore islands in 1820.

Entry Wedge for Russia

The letter of the university professors denies that the treaty provides an entry wedge for Russia into the Antarctic continent. I challenge this assertion.

If the claims of other nations and the rights of the United States in the Antarctic have any validity at all, then the Soviet Union has been carrying on its International Geophysical Year activities at the bottom of the world on the basis of a kind of "visitor's visa." The effect of the Antarctic treaty is to grant the Soviet Union "full citizenship," so to speak, in the Antarctic.

Conversely, the treaty downgraded the status and rights of the United States and other free nations in the Antarctic, by the ritual of granting us—simultaneously and equally with the Soviet Union—a "right to citizenship" in the Antarctic continent conceived of as an international scientific preserve.

I am not suggesting that we should resort to force to terminate Soviet scientific activities in the Antarctic. Subject to the right of inspection, I would be quite prepared to see them continue their scientific activities. But the Antarctic treaty was certainly not necessary for the purpose of according them this permission. There would have been no danger of conflict, no tension, had we let matters stand as they were.

This treaty, in short, was completely uncalled for. It is a gratuitous give-away of American rights, in the hope that this will somehow neutralize an implacable aggressor. In any sense, no matter what the intentions of the Administration, the treaty constitutes an act of appeasement.

THEODORE J. DODD,
United States Senate.